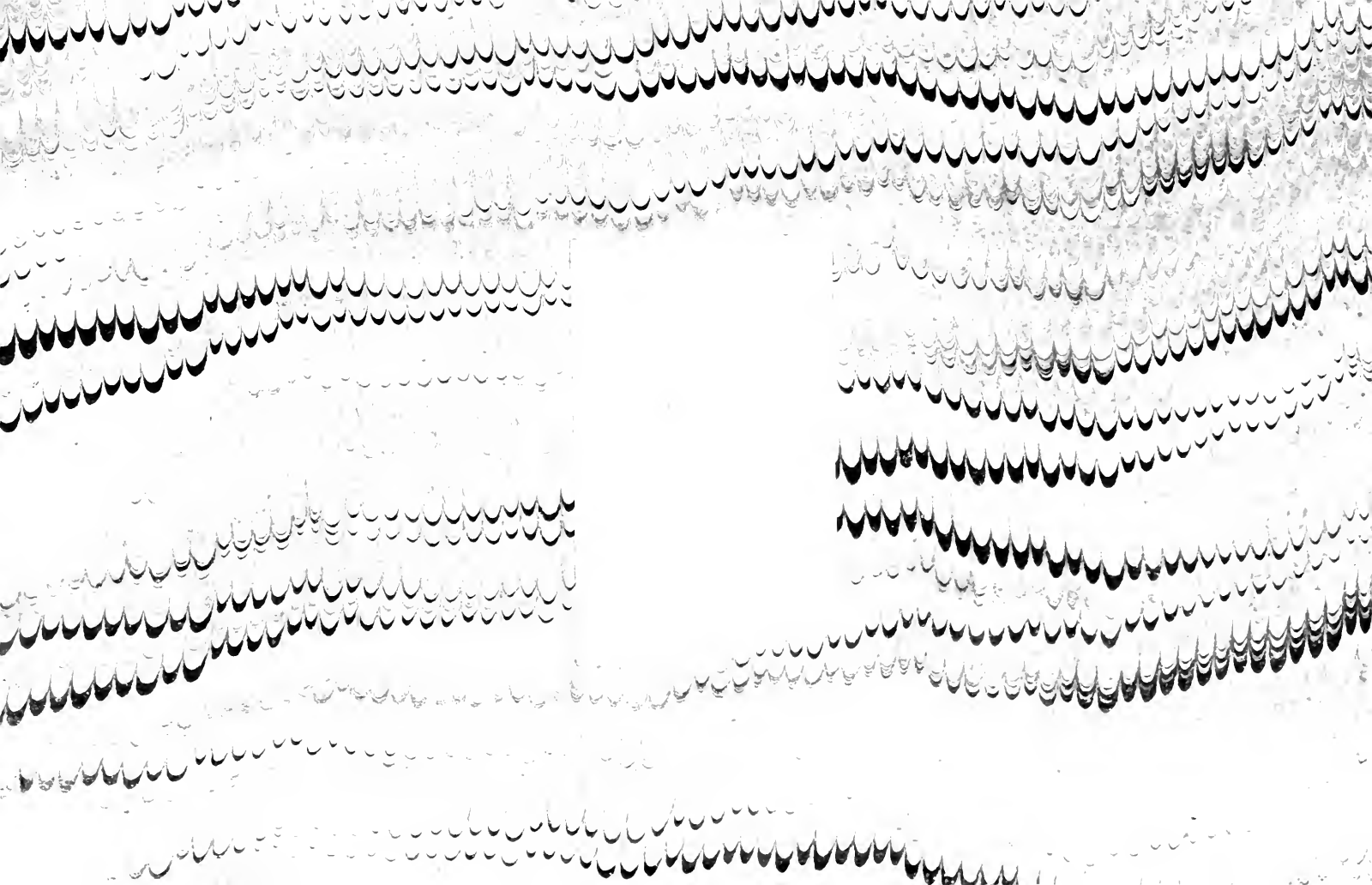
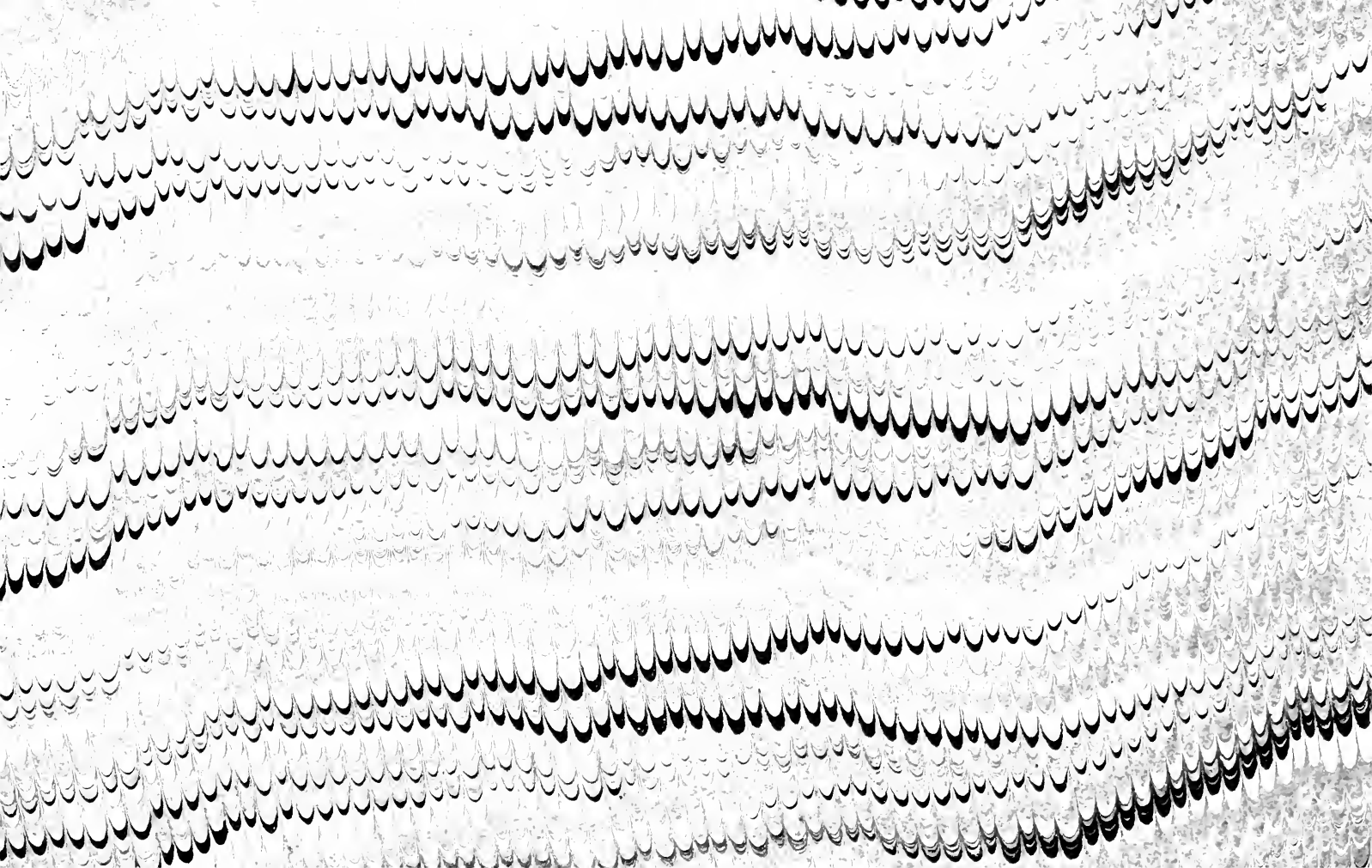
E





THE UNION! ITS DANGERS!!

AND HOW THEY CAN BE AVERTED.

LETTER FROM SAMUEL J. TILDEN

TO

HON. WILLIAM KENT.

To the Hon. William Kent:

Dear Sir: Among my early memories of public affairs, during the tariff and nullification controversies, I recollect the illustrious name of your father, James Kent, signed to a call for a meeting of the citizens of New York, to recommend to Congress the adoption of measures of conciliation towards our brethren of the South. The association recurs to my mind as often as I think of your name on the Union electoral ticket, which I consider a most wise and necessary endeavor to rescue our country in a far more perilous political conjuncture. I had no agency in putting it there; but I know it represents no partisan interest, prejudice or passion, no man's vanity or ambition, and still less any illiberal opinion or feeling towards natives of foreign lands who have chosen this for their home. It represents nothing less worthy or less noble than patriotic devotion to the country, and serious and well-considered solicitude for the welfare of the hitherto fortunate people of these, as yet, United States. I share the sentiments which animate you in the present crisis. I recall your desire when last we met, that I should express to our citizens the convictions often avowed to you. An occasion has arisen which commits me to do so. I have chosen the form of a letter; I dedicate that letter to you. It is a testimony of my respect and affection, and that we think the same things concerning our country. Your interest in the great theme will compensate all deficiencies in the offering.

THE USE OF PARTIES.

The tendency of parties is to draw the various political elements into two divisions, and to equalize those divisions. The minority adopts enough of the ideas of the majority to attract those who are nearest to the line of division; and the majority, in struggling to retain them, makes concessions. The issue is thus constantly shifting "with the wavering tide of battle," until the policy, which at last prevails has become adjusted so as nearly to represent the average sense of the whole people. It is rare in our political experience that the difference between the majority and the minority equals five per cent. of the whole number; extremely rare except in cases where the issue on which the parties form is made up to suit specially some locality. In shaping the policy which emerges from the conflict, the minority acts a part scarcely less important than the majority; and the dissentients are thus prepared to accept the result.

THE PROCESS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Such is the process by which the will of all the parts of the community is collected, averaged and represented in the policy finally agreed upon. This is the method of self-government.

WHY SELF-GOVERNMENT IS BEST.

The reason why self-government is better than government by any one man, or by a foreign people, is that the policy evolved by this process is generally better adapted to the actual condition of the society on which it is to operate. Government by one man often fails to understand, but it usually defers. Government by a foreign people neither understands nor defers. It has no adaptation to the wants or temper of the governed. It is, therefore, about the worst government that can be imagined.

THE FEDERATIVE SYSTEM OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Our fathers understood this truth. They had tried the experiment. They had been driven to revolution by George the Third, said to be the "most honest man in his own dominions," and by the genial Lord North, and had seen how cordially the British people sustained whatever was worst in all the policy of monarch and minister. They foresaw that a single government, exercising all the powers of society over the people destined to occupy so vast a region as the United States, and embracing the elements of such diversities of interest, industry, opinion, habits and manners, would be intolerable to bear and impossible to continue. They, therefore, largely adopted the federative idea in the mixed system which they established; and vesting only the powers appertaining to our foreign relations and to certain specified common objects of a domestic nature in a federative agency, they left the great residuary mass of governmental functions to the several states.

ANOMALOUS CHARACTER OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

In the practical working of this beautiful but complex system, the Republican party is a phenomenon, new and startling. It is the first instance in which any partisan organization has been able to compete, with any prospect of success, for ascendancy in our federative government, without being national in its structure, without being composed of majorities—or of minorities able to compete effectively with majorities—in all the states of both great sections of the Union. The Republican party has no practical existence in all the fifteen southern states. In a few points, where the five border states touch the North, it has a nominal existence, but without any appreciable power over the opinion or action of those states. In the ten other states it has no affiliations whatever.

THAT SECTIONAL CHARACTER INHERENT.

This condition of things is not an accident. It is the result of five years of earnest discussion before the southern people of the character and objects of the Republican party. It is produced against the strongest motives which influence the formation of party connections. Ties of ancient association between most of its members, and the dissevered minorities of the South—fragments of the old whig party, anxious to beat their local rivals, and impelled towards alliances by the instinct of self-preservation; common opposition to an existing administration; the prospect of common success, and of sharing in a political ascendancy—all these potential causes united have utterly failed to draw to it any considerable numbers of adherents in all the South, against the pervading, immense, overwhelming public opinion of all those states.

I speak not now of causes. I simply state the fact. Our Republican friends will say that their policy is misunderstood by the southern people. There is undoubtedly a serious misunderstanding between the Republican party and the whole southern people. In what does this misunderstanding consist? It is easier for the Republican party to mistake as to the effects of its policy on the interests of the South, than for the whole southern people to mistake the real nature of that policy.

I am apt to pay some respect to the unanimous opinion of great commonwealths on a question peculiarly affecting themselves.

REPUBLICAN ASCENDENCY IS PRACTICALLY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT.

If such an organization as the Republican party should acquire complete possession of the federative government, what sort of a system would it be? To the people of the fifteen states it would be a *foreign government*. It would be erected over them through the forms of their constitution; but that would not affect its practical character. None of their citizens would have concurred in bringing the administration into existence. None of their public opinion would be represented in that administration.

PERILOUS SUBJECT OF THE CONTROVERSY.

Now, what is the question between the eighteen northern states and the fifteen southern states of the confederacy, out of which arises a state of things so novel and so extraordinary?

It is a controversy—(how far of mere opinion and how far operating practically, I will presently discuss)—it is a controversy which touches the relations of two races, being eight and a half millions of whites and four millions of blacks, composing all the population of these fifteen states; relations which constitute a whole system of industry, furnishing their staple exports and their exchanges with us and with all the world; relations which thus involve a vast interest in property—not less than three thousand millions of dollars—permeating these fifteen states; relations which are the basis of the habits of families and of society in all these commonwealths, and of their social order, a shock to which is associated in the mind of the dominant race, with a pervading sense of danger to the life of every human being and the honor of every woman.

This nature of the subject matter, out of which the controversy arises, explains and accounts for a state of parties so anomalous. Such a disorder in the voluntary machinery by which popular government is carried on, is in itself serious; but it is more important as a symptom of a malady in the body-politic, deeply seated and far more dangerous.

SECTIONALISM OF PARTIES.

Sectionalism of parties has hitherto never gone beyond a little predominance of a party in the states of one section and a little predominance of the other party in the states of another section. In that mild form its tendency alarmed the heroic mind of Washington, and drew from him an impressive warning in his Farewell Address. Sectionalism is now threatening to become absolute in a predominance of a party in eighteen states which has no practical existence in fifteen states.

Sectionalism of parties has hitherto been founded in differences upon subjects comparatively unimportant. It touched nothing deeper than the details of a tariff, when it called out all the patriotic courage and energy of Jackson to avert its dangers.

Sectionalism is now founded upon differences of opinion reaching to the very structure of civil society in fifteen states.

With the prudent and conservative Monroe mediating at the head of the government, and with Clay in the House of Representatives, exerting for pacification all his matchless power over assemblies,

sectionalism, not of popular parties, but in Congress, on a question like the present, though, in the mitigated form of the Missouri controversy, woke Jefferson, as he expressed it, "like a fire-bell at night," from the repose of his retirement, and made him for the first time almost despair of the republic. Sectionalism on a question of the same nature is now worn into the minds of the people by five years of organized agitation. It has become the sole basis of existing party divisions, and threatens to seize all the powers of the government.

Each of the elements of evil, which, of a feebler type, and in an incipient state, filled these heroes and statesmen of our revolutionary and constitutional era with apprehension, is now grown to a magnitude which they could never have conceived; and these elements, thus grown, are conjoined into one monstrous malady. And yet every shallow sophister who can pen a line for the skimming eye of thoughtless readers, wiser than Washington, braver than Jackson, more skilled in our complex government than Jefferson, scoffs at the danger, and scoffs at all who see it as insincere or timid!

EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE FOR DISUNION.

A sectional division, upon a sectional issue, of the great parties which organize and represent the conflicting opinions of society, and which compete for the control of the machinery of government in a system of confederated states, rapidly and effectually educates the people for disunion.

It is not the ordinary case of party excitements between citizens united in the same community. There, misapprehensions are removed and animosities assuaged by mutual contact; adversaries mingle in the transactions of business and in the intercourse of society; meet at the same church in a common worship, and on a thousand occasions of familiar and friendly association; they are brought together and kept together by common friends; they are interlaced with each other by the numberless ties which spring up, and grow around, and grow over individuals living in one community; they cannot move their houses, shops, or farms; they cannot tear asunder the social ligaments which bind them together.

Now imagine parties such as we have often known them, in their mutual misapprehensions and mutual injustice, and their passionate animosities; one party dominating in eighteen states on one side of a geographical line, and the other composing the whole people of fifteen states on the other side of that line. They know each other only through their excited imaginations. The antipathies of each are directed against a distant people. Each is organized into states, with complete governments, holding the purse and wielding the sword. They are held together only by a compact of confederation.

FEDERATIVE SYSTEM INCREASES SUCH DANGERS.

Will their mutual animosities be equally safe, equally harmless as the party controversies of individuals united in one community? The strain, the shock of the collision between these organized masses, must be vastly greater. The single, slender, conventional tie which holds states in confederation, has no strength compared with the compacted, intertwining fibres which bind the atoms of human society into one formation of natural growth.

The masters in political science who constructed our system, preserved the state governments as bulwarks of the freedom of individuals and localities against oppression from centralized power. They recognised no right of constitutional secession, but they left revolution organized, whenever it should be demanded by the public opinion of a state; left it with power to snap the tie of confederation as a nation might break a treaty, and to repel coercion as a nation might repel invasion. They caused us to depend, in a great measure, upon the public opinion of the states in order to maintain a confederated Union. They intended to make it necessary for us, in every reasonable extent, to respect that public opinion.

How long could an organized popular agitation in England against France, or in France against England, continue without actual hostilities, especially if embracing a majority of the people and the governments? Wars have as often been produced by popular passions as by the policy of rulers; but I venture to say that in the causes of all such wars during a century past, there has not been so much material for offence as could be found every year in the fulminations of a party swaying the governments of many northern states against the entire social and industrial systems of fifteen of our sister states;—so much to repel the opinion, to alienate the sentiments and to wound the pride.

MODERATE REPUBLICANS.

It would be doing injustice to multitudes of patriotic citizens who belong to the Republican party to impute to them extreme opinions or intentions consciously hostile to the peace and safety of the southern states. Antagonism to the democratic party, habitual with many who were whigs; misapprehensions and excitement growing out of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the Kansas controversy; opposition to various incidents in the policy of the existing democratic Administration; the desire for change and for new combinations which arises under a continuous ascendency of any party in our country—all these motives of political action have arrayed in the Republican ranks many men of moderate opinions, who, if they saw the real nature and inevitable results of a sectional party organization, would recoil from them in just and patriotic alarm.

FALSE POSITION OF THEIR PARTY.

It is not the purposes of such men but the practical attitude of their party which constitutes the evil. That party is in a false position. Without the counterpoise which would be the effect of its affiliation with the opposition element in the southern states, freed from any such necessity for moderation, competing for popular favor in the North alone, and, therefore, addressing itself exclusively to northern opinions, prejudices and passions, it has been steadily drifting into a more vehement, a less discriminating and a blinder antagonism to the South, and yielding to the dominion of extreme ideas and of the more violent elements which it contains. Without anything to represent it in the southern states, it has no means to resist the inevitable tendency there to impute to it purposes even beyond those which it really entertains; and no means of inspiring confidence, allaying apprehension, or conciliating opinion among the masses in the localities of the South.

THE NECESSARY CONSEQUENCES.

It is thus that the divergence between these majorities of the North on the one side and the whole people of the South on the other, has been for years increasing. Extremes on the one side provoke extremes on the other. Alienation, mutual distrust, misapprehension of each others motives and objects, animosities, and above all and worse than all, convictions and principles which induce each to dictate impracticable conditions of reconciliation, are setting deeper and deeper into the masses under the influence of systematic sectional agitation.

It would be strange if this immense and powerful popular machinery swaying the state governments of both sections, which has been employed for five years in dividing the country geographically, had not cloven down between the masses of the people in the two sections a chasm deeper and wider and more difficult to close up than ever existed before.

CHRONIC SECTIONALISM IS INEVITABLE DISUNION.

If such a division of parties, founded upon such antagonism of opinions, habits and interests involving the systems of industry and of society, existing at the North and in the South, becomes chronic, its natural and inevitable result must be disunion. The cord of fraternal sentiment and common opinion which holds the sections together, cannot, by any possibility, endure the gradual, steady wear of these unceasing conflicts, and the ever augmenting violence of the shock of repeated collisions between the popular masses which the two sections embody.

This is, to me, no new opinion. I communicated it in writing in 1855, to a gentleman now eminent in the Republican party, before he engaged in its formation; and expressed the conviction that the evil would have reached a dangerous, if not fatal point of culmination when a purely northern party should have found itself able to elect a President on a pitched battle with the southern states over questions and ideas which thrill to the very life-centres of southern society.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION THUS FAR.

I have now considered the anomalous nature of the Republican party as an organization; I have shown how, as it assumes the powers of our federative system, it subverts the essential character of that system, and erects in practice a foreign government over fifteen states. I have pointed out how, in the meantime, such a division of parties is educating the people for disunion; in what manner it ripens its fatal fruits, and to what maturity they have already approached. I have indicated the subject of the controversy between the northern majorities and the southern people, out of which this condition of things arises; demonstrated how near it is to the very structure of civil, social and industrial life in all the South; and inferred that it is only such a subject of controversy that could create such a state of parties; and conversely, that such a state of parties, on such a subject, is a concentrated evil and an accumulated danger. I have invoked the maxims deduced from the experience of all mankind, and our own accepted theories of self-government to justifying me in stating the immense presumption, that the southern people understand the effects upon themselves of the Republican organization and policy better than the Republicans do; and that, at all events, the nearly unanimous judgment of fifteen great communities ought to be respected; that their judgment, as to the establishment over them of any affirmative measures exclusively affecting themselves, ought to be conclusive.

It remains to analyse the avowed proposition of the Republican party to the people of the South.

Are the southern people to be convinced, or is the Republican party to recede from its principles, its policy, and its organization? In what manner is a reconciliation to be effected, and upon what terms? What ought to be the basis of a reconciliation? Will the Republican party make it voluntarily, or must the people of the North cast off the Republican party as an element of disease and discord, and thus restore harmony and health to our federative system?

If the Republican party entrenches itself in the Presidency, will the constitution of our body politic await the tardy remedy, or will it perish in the process towards restoration?

These are grave questions. Let us proceed to consider them.

CHARACTER, AIMS AND POLICY OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

What is the character of the Republican party? What are the aims? What is to be its practical policy, in case it gains possession of the government?

ORGANIZED AGITATION AGAINST SLAVERY.

1. It is an organized agitation on the general question of slavery, mainly irrespective of the practical application of its conclusions to any proposed measure of legislation or administration by the federal government. It is not easy to define the exact limit where the liberty of philosophical speculation or abstract discussion ends, and an offence against good neighborhood—whether of individuals, families or states—begins. But it is very clear that the Republican party has passed that boundary; for an organized agitation by a majority of one community, including its government, against the social or industrial system of a neighboring and friendly community is an offence which leads to alienation and hostility, if not to actual war. Even if we assume that the exclusion of slavery from the territories is within the legitimate sphere of the federal government, it cannot be pretended that the general character of the discussion kept up by the Republican party is subordinate to that end. Indeed, the territorial aspect of the controversy has almost entirely disappeared. Instead of inquiring how far it is the right and the duty of the northern states through the federal government to give effect on the territorial question to the general ideas they might be assumed to entertain, the orators and journals, which represent the Republican party are almost exclusively occupied in exciting the hostility of the people against slavery as a system, irrespective of the territories, and often the intention is avowed to act by indirect means upon slavery within the states.

"MORAL SUASION" THROUGH OUR FEDERATIVE GOVERNMENT.

Among those means is a gigantic system of "moral suasion," as Mr. Seward calls it in one of his recent speeches, *moral coercion* in fact, by which it shall propagate its ideas among the people of the southern states against their present social and industrial systems, through permanent party organizations dominating in the northern states, swaying the northern governments, and finally through the federative government of all the states. Mr. Seward does not say whether the postmasters and other officers of the federative government are to be made little centres of anti-slavery opinion; but he seems to think that all the usual methods by which parties act may be properly applied to the end. Now the states are as sovereign, with respect to slavery within their own borders as any foreign nation. If we were by "moral suasion" to attempt to apply our ideas in respect to the only rightful form of government, or in respect to the freedom of the press to the French people, through our minister at Paris, he would be dismissed, and if found to be acting under our instructions, we should become objects of just hostilities on the part of the French government. A similar experiment in the southern states would probably result in the expulsion of the federal officials, if not in a civil war. According to the principles of public law and in all moral aspects, such interference in the internal affairs of a state would be more inexcusable when she were united with us in a confederation, than if she were in all respects a foreign nation. And the difficulty of the case is, that even if the endeavor were fairly made to confine the agitation to the territorial question, it would be impossible so to confine it in practice, on the basis of opinion which characterizes the Republican party, and gives it all its vitality.

FALSE RULE OF LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

2. The rule of moral right and duty which, I think, may be fairly said to be generally adopted by the Republican party, is stated by Mr. Seward, in his speech at Lansing: "I will favor, as long as I can," said he, "within the limits of constitutional action, the decrease and diminution of African slavery in all the states."

THEORY OF THIS RULE.

The theory is, that slavery is a wrong, without reference to any condition of time, place, or circumstances; that the limit of our moral responsibility for the wrong is fixed exactly according to our legal and constitutional power to remove it; that it is, therefore, not only our right but our duty to exert whatever legal or constitutional power we possess for its removal.

This theory runs through all Mr. Seward's speeches; and is, I think, the master-key to the whole argument by which the Republican leaders address the popular mind.

ITS PRACTICE.

The practical application and necessary consequences of this theory, can be gleaned from the speeches of Mr. Seward.

INDIRECT ACTION ON SLAVERY WITHIN THE STATES.

In his recent speech at Dubuque, he states what it is *not* proposed to do, in this guarded manner: "We do not *vote* against slavery in Virginia. We do not authorize Abraham Lincoln or the Congress of the United States to *pass any laws* about slavery in Virginia." Observe how carefully his language is framed not to disclaim any of the forms of *indirect action* upon slavery within the states.

CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION BY EXCLUDING ONE AND ADMITTING THE OTHER CLASS OF STATES.

In his Rochester speech he thus indicates the constitutional mode of abolishing slavery within the states:

"It is true that they (the fathers) necessarily and wisely modified this policy of freedom, by leaving it to the several states, affected as they were by different circumstances, to abolish slavery in their own way and at their own pleasure instead of confiding that duty to Congress.

* * * * * *

"But the very nature of these modifications fortifies my position that the fathers knew that *the two systems could not endure within the Union*, and expected that within a short period slavery would disappear forever. Moreover, in order that these modifications might not altogether defeat their grand design of a republic maintaining *universal equality*, *they provided that two-thirds of the states might amend the constitution*.

"It remains to say on this point only one word, to guard against misapprehension. If these states are to again become universally slaveholding, I do not pretend to say with what violations of the constitution that end shall be accomplished. On the other hand, while I do confidently believe and hope that my country will yet become a land of universal freedom, I do not expect that it will be made so otherwise than through *the action of the several states co-operating with the federal government*, and all acting in strict conformity with their respective constitutions."

The mode provided by the constitution for its own amendment, is not accurately stated by Mr. Seward in the above extract, but the plan of applying it so as to abolish slavery within the states is sufficiently disclosed. In a recent speech, he proposes to absolutely exclude from admission into the Union all new states having slaves, and to apply our northern system to all new states; evidently looking to the multiplication of the free states until their number shall enable them to alter the constitution and "the grand design of a republic maintaining universal equality" shall be consummated, without the consent and in defiance of the will of the southern states.

RE-ORGANIZING THE SUPREME COURT.

In a speech in the Senate he proposed to re-organize the Supreme Court of the United States for the purpose of reversing the decision upon the relative rights of the states and their citizens on the question of slavery.

DISBANDING THE ARMY AND NAVY.

And at Lansing he declared that it was his "duty as a patriot" to go for having "no army and navy" of the Union, because their "whole object" was "that slaves may not escape from the slave states into the free, and that freed or emancipated negroes in the free states may not enter and introduce civil war into the slave states, and because that, if we provoke a foreign enemy, the southern frontier is exposed to invasion from England, France and Spain." The constitution not only contains an express covenant for the protection of each of the states against "domestic violence" and foreign "invasion," but in its preamble declares that to "ensure domestic tranquillity" and "provide for the common defence" were among the very objects for which it was instituted. And yet Mr. Seward avows the startling doctrine that for the very reason that the army and navy are used to carry out these objects in respect to the southern states they ought to be disbanded.

BIDDING REVOLUTION "GOOD SPEED."

In his recent speech at Madison, he declares that "it is by a simple rule that he has studied the constitution," which rule is that "no human being," "no race," should be "kept down in their efforts to rise to a higher state of liberty and happiness"; but that if any such "would rise, I say to them, in God's name, good speed."

THE PRACTICAL RESULT.

The result he stated in a speech at an early day: "It (slavery) can and must be abolished, and you and I must do it."

OBJECT OF TEACHING THE DOCTRINE OF THE "IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT."

And in order to incite the northern mind to a crusade against slavery in the states, as well as the territories, to blind the eye of the North and still its conscience to the aggressive character of the movement against the social and industrial systems of our sister states, violating alike the express compacts of the constitution and the principles of public law which define the relations of independent sovereignties, he adopts the fallacious theory invented by Mr. Lincoln, of the "irrepressible conflict." He teaches not as a doctrine of abstract philosophy, but a practical necessity, that the northern states cannot preserve their own social and industrial systems without overthrowing those of the southern states; that "the rye fields and wheat fields of Massachusetts and New York must be surrendered by their farmers to slave culture and to the production of slaves, and Boston and New York become once more markets for trade in the bodies and souls of men," or, "the cotton and rice fields of South Carolina and the sugar plantations of Louisiana" be "tilled by free labor." Having thus invested the crusade with all the sanctions of the sacred necessity of self-defence, he leads it forward, by the methods and means which I have exhibited, through artful evasions of the forms of the constitution to violate the substance of its obligations.

PREVALENCE OF IMPRACTICABLE IDEAS.

I certainly do not impute to every member of the Republican party such sentiments. On the con-

trary, there are large numbers of patriotic citizens attached to that party wholly incapable of adopting theories so wild, so fanatical, so revolutionary; and I admit, that even the mass of those who assent to them, do not see their true character, or the inevitable disasters of attempting to reduce them to practice.

But, I cannot fail to see in the mind of every second man I meet among the Republicans, the prevalence of ideas upon which it is impracticable to administer a confederated government. I lament it as a consequence of a division of parties, in which the northern people know neither the subject of the controversy nor its true bearing, nor their antagonists, except through their imaginations.

MR. SEWARD'S RELATION TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

Mr. Seward represents the greatest state of the Union in the Senate; is of mature age and experience; and has more partisans and more practical power over the Republican mind and the Republican organization than any other one of its members. He is its representative man. He has recently traversed the northern states, with social revolution dropping from his lips at every step, amid the acclamations of the masses of the Republican party. And yet men are found who ascribe to the prejudices of the South, or to misrepresentations of the aims of the Republican party, the complete alienation and repulsion of the unanimous public opinion of the southern people, which undeniably exists.

ORIGIN OF THESE FALSE SYSTEMS.

The origin of all this evil is in the rule of conduct to which I have adverted, as generally adopted by the Republicans, and indeed to a considerable extent accepted by the northern mind.

RULE FOR CONSTRUING AND EXECUTING THE CONSTITUTION.

As a rule of right and duty for the construction and execution of the constitution, the theory maintained by Mr. Seward, and too extensively accepted, is entirely fallacious. No contract governing complicated transactions or relations between men, and applying permanently through the changes inevitable in human affairs, can be effectual if either party intended to be bound by it is at liberty to construe or execute its provisions in a spirit of hostility to the substantial objects of these provisions. Especially is this true of a compact of confederation between the states, where there can be no common arbiter invested with authorities and powers equally capable with those which courts possess between individuals for determining and enforcing a just construction and execution of the instrument. Mr. Seward sees, the public mind of the South sees more clearly, that an institution of the peculiar nature of slavery cannot long exist within the states if the powers of the federative government are to be swayed in active hostility to it, even though no violation of the express letter of the constitution be perpetrated; even though the hostile action be confined to a systematic use of the powers of the government for the purposes of its destruction, and to a systematic abdication of the powers of protection when they incidentally affect slavery in operating upon the communities in which it exists.

CRITERION OF MORAL RIGHT AND DUTY.

The rule to which I have adverted is equally fallacious as a criterion of moral right and duty. No man has the right or duty to impose his own convictions upon others, or to govern his own conduct in his relations with others, by his exclusive opinion or will. His right and duty in such cases are not absolute, but qualified. In practice, no man can get along in his relations with others, even with those who are most subject to him, if he exercise his full legal or constitutional powers absolutely according to his individual opinion or will. No husband can live with his wife; no father with his children; no partner with his associates on such terms.

DUTY OF SELF-RESTRAINT.

Now the idea I wish to inculcate is that there is no moral wrong in our accepting the self-restraint upon the exercise of even our undoubted legal and constitutional powers which the experience of mankind has shown to be wise.

It is upon the same idea, applied to our physical powers, that the public law of the world, which forbids the intervention of one state in the purely internal affairs of another, is built up.

IDEA OF SELF-RESTRAINT THE BASIS OF OUR FEDERATIVE SYSTEM.

When our fathers entered upon the work of forming the Union, they found the states existing as independent sovereignties. They might have constructed a system which would have been imperial in its character, subjecting all the internal affairs of the states to the dominion of a centralized government. Or they might have made the mixed system which they established imperial in respect to the subject of slavery within the states. Or, if failing to obtain the consent of any state to such a system, they might have excluded that state from the Union.

NOT WRONG, BUT WISE AND RIGHT.

Did they commit a moral wrong in choosing to leave the whole subject of slavery within each state to its separate judgment? I think that they did not. The decision which they made accorded with the whole theory on which they constructed the government. It was wise in itself. It was right. If the wisdom collected from the experience of the world in regard to government is to be relied on,

the distribution of powers they adopted was the best, the depository of the trust of working out the problem of the superior and subject races within the states, if not perfect, was the safest which the nature of the case admitted. It is binding upon us not merely by the force of compact, not merely by a great principle of public law, but by its intrinsic wisdom and righteousness.

OBJECTION ANSWERED.

It is no answer to this reasoning to say that the dominant race in a state where slavery exists is upon this question an interested party as well as the judge. Such is the position of the governing power in every human society; and yet so wonderful are the laws of mutual action and influence between the parts of the social mechanism that it has generally been able to work out the welfare of all better than foreign government, and better than propagandism of any system by foreign force. The selfishness of the one, modified by so many restraints, is rarely so dangerous as the inexpert ignorance and impracticable experiments of the others. I cannot think it a misfortune that, according to the system of our fathers, no appeal lies from the white man of the states where slavery exists to the white man of the other states. It is not a moral wrong to construe and execute the provisions of the constitution affecting this question, and even to extend and apply them to incidental questions not foreseen at its formation, in accordance with the plan, and in the spirit of comprehensive wisdom in which that instrument was conceived.

THE TERRITORIAL QUESTION.

2. I come now to the position of the Republican party on the territorial question. I understand that position to be, that it is the right and duty of the people, through the federative government, to effectually prevent the extension of slavery beyond the geographical area in which it now exists within the present states.

The Chicago platform applies the doctrine that all men are entitled to liberty, to the black race, without any qualification of place, time or circumstances; and applies the principle of restriction to all the territories. Mr. Seward has lately restated the position of the Republican party, in these words: "Our responsibilities are limited to the states yet to come into the Union, and we will apply our system to them."

Mr. Lincoln's speeches are full of denunciations of "the further spread of slavery," the restriction of which will, he predicts, "place it where the public mind will rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction." "We know," says he, "the opening of new countries tends to the perpetuation of the institution, and so does keep men in slavery who would otherwise be free." "Nothing," he again says, "will make you successful, but setting up a policy which shall treat the thing as wrong." * * * "This government is expressly charged with the duty of providing for the general welfare. We believe that the spreading out and perpetuity of the institution of slavery impairs the general welfare." * * * "To repress this thing, we think, is providing for the general welfare."

THEORY ON WHICH ABSOLUTE RESTRICTION IS FOUNDED.

The philosophical idea on which the policy of restriction rests is, that if the system of slavery be absolutely confined to a fixed geographical area, the emigration of the white race who wish to retain the system, and of the black race held under it, will be restrained; that both races will go on increasing by births; that the population within that area becoming more and more dense, the cost of subsisting the slave will press with constantly augmenting force upon the value of his labor, until the master ceases to derive any surplus, and voluntarily emancipates the slave.

This idea is sometimes expressed in the affirmative sense of extinguishing slavery; and sometimes in the negative sense of refusing to perpetuate it; but the means and the results are identical in both cases.

OBJECT OF THE POLICY AND MODE OF ITS ENFORCEMENT.

The policy of restriction aims to control, directly and immediately, the distribution between the occupied and unoccupied portions of the continent belonging to us, of the eight and a half millions of whites and four millions of blacks now co-existing in the fifteen southern states and of all their descendants, so long as the present relation between the two races shall continue. It aims indirectly and eventually to subvert the relation which now exists between the two races. The Republican party proposes to establish this policy by a combination of majorities of the people of the northern states, acting through the federal government, against the unanimous opposition of the whole people of the fifteen southern states. The judgment of the northern states, pure and simple, adversely to the judgment of the southern states, is to take upon itself, and prescribe and enforce its own solution of this great problem of races, their distribution and relations, which reaches to the very social life-centres of fifteen southern states.

A MERE ABSTRACTION AT PRESENT.

It is true that, at present, so far as the territories are concerned, the policy is a mere theory. There is no territory whose destiny is practically in dispute. The area within the fifteen southern states is more than the growth and expansion of the social and industrial systems of the South can at present occupy.

Might not the North rest in the hope that the next generation, when it should have occasion to act practically, would do so with larger experience and greater wisdom? Might it not wait and see? Is it necessary for us to seize the powers of the government to establish and enforce any policy so far in advance—especially, by the dangerous machinery of a purely northern party creating in practice a purely northern government—more especially at the hazard of scattering in ruins the glorious fabric of civil liberty reared by our fathers?

THE THEORY ANALYZED.

But let us confront this theory as a permanent and final policy. Let us analyze it, and see what would be its future value, and whether it can ever become established.

NATURAL AND MATERIAL LAWS.

Before entering on that discussion, I pause to trace the natural and material laws which are working out the distribution of races on our own portion of this continent, and shaping the social and industrial systems of the new states.

Whoever will study the course of emigration from the old states to the unsettled lands of the West, will find that in the main it follows the adaptations of the new region to the industrial, domestic and social habitudes of those who seek to better their condition by the use of cheaper and richer soils. The current of northern emigration does not deviate largely from certain parallels of latitude. The current of southern emigration, tending in the same general direction, spreads out, perhaps deflects to the southwest. The volume of the northern current is from twice to three times as large as that of the southern current; and, therefore, tends to press southwardly the line where the two touch each other. Geographical causes favor this result. As you reach the eastern border of Texas, the Gulf shore turns towards the South. As you pass Missouri you begin to ascend to the more austere climates of the great slope of the Rocky Mountains.

Material causes intervene to turn a portion of the southern emigration to the southwest and also to separate the element of slavery and to carry that to the southwest.

SLAVERY WITHDRAWS FROM THE TRACK OF NORTHERN EMIGRATION.

The result is that slavery has no tendency to extend itself in or towards the track of northern settlers. On the contrary, it is withdrawing and moving towards the tropics. Obvious before, this law has been rendered more conspicuous and more potential to mature its fruits rapidly, by the remarkable events which have characterized the last ten or fifteen years.

MATERIAL CAUSES ACCELERATE.

The great and steady influx of gold, acting upon the circulating medium and the systems of credit, has, to an extraordinary degree, stimulated production and consumption throughout all Christendom. One effect is seen in the transcendent growth of the foreign trade of all the civilized nations. Another is in an improvement of the physical condition of the masses, and an enlargement of their command over the necessaries, comforts and even luxuries of life, greater, perhaps, than they have hitherto attained in any one century.

Cotton has been found to be the cheapest and most convenient material for human clothing; which, after food and shelter, is the first object of the enlarged means of expenditure by the masses. The spindle and the loom could be multiplied to keep pace with the augmenting demand; but negro hands to cultivate the cotton fields could not. They must wait the slow course of nature, or be diverted from other employments; and even both resources have been thus far insufficient. Through the war in the Crimea and the war in Italy, through the panic of 1854 and the revulsion of 1857, cotton has, in the main, held the even tenor of its way, in a range of high prices; while iron, coal, lumber, sugar and breadstuffs have undergone extreme and violent fluctuations. Cotton has been unceasingly out-bidding other employments for negro hands. It has within ten years doubled, probably more than doubled the market value of all such labor. A man who to-day employs slaves in raising wheat or corn on the southern bank of the Ohio, uses labor at least twice as costly as it was ten years ago. His neighbor on the northern bank finds the moderate advance in free labor resulting from the increase in general prices, compensated by improved machinery; and can produce wheat as cheaply as ten years ago.

Cotton is struggling hard to translate the black race held in slavery to the seats of its own and kindred cultures. Family and social habits, an honorable sentiment against selling dependants towards whom the worth and piety of the South consider themselves as trustees, resists; but the changes of life are inevitable; and the social laws at last prevail, as the unceasing current of a stream outlasts the strokes of the swimmer. I see every day testimonies of the actual working of these tendencies. I read, not long ago, in the Evening Post, an extract from the St. Louis *Democrat*, stating that one hundred slaves daily left St. Louis for the South. That statement may have been inaccurate as a matter of detail; but the general fact cannot be questioned.

RESTRICTION IN THE TRACK OF SOUTHERN EMIGRATION.

If, then, slavery has no capacity to extend itself, in any practical degree, into or towards the track

of northern emigration; let us now inquire what would be the results of the restrictive policy applied to the track of southern emigration.

This, I have already observed, is, at present—perhaps for all our generation—a purely theoretical question. But let us imagine that it were now a practical question. Let us suppose that all the eight and a half millions of whites and four millions of blacks composing the population of the fifteen southern states were concentrated in the region east of the boundary between Alabama and Mississippi.

I do not now decide whether the degree of density required for the perfection of the experiment would even then have been attained; and, in the progress towards that density, doubtless the whites not holding slaves would have been, to a large extent, expelled. But assume the conditions to be such that the cost of subsisting the slave would approach the value of his labor. I would like to have our philosophers and philanthropists who advise the experiment solve some difficulties which we must anticipate.

IMPRACTICABLE OR UNNECESSARY.

1. What is there in human history to warrant the idea that a people, not having yet consented to self-destruction, could be confined on one side of an imaginary line, with their physical condition steadily approximating to the want and misery which attend excessive density of population, when on the other side of that imaginary line, unoccupied and fertile lands invite them to abundance and prosperity? What degree of power in the government would be required to enforce a law imposing such a policy upon even a feeble community? What degree of coercion would be required against eight and a half millions of our race? three times as many as achieved our revolution? Against how many and in what proportions of the two races such coercion would have to be exerted when all the present territory should be filled up with population to the requisite degree of density, it is impossible to predict; but it is perfectly safe to say that the policy proposed by the Republican party to be theoretically adopted as a finality, at vast hazard of general ruin, a generation in advance of the time when it could take full practical effect, would, as soon as that time should arrive, prove wholly impracticable without the consent of the people to whom it would be applied: as with that consent it would be wholly unnecessary.

Is it expected that the people to whom the system is to be applied will be blind and deaf until it shall have approached such fatal results? Is it not inevitable that they will be as prompt to resist and repel as you will be to organize and inflict your system?

FALSE PHILANTHROPY.

2. Does not the nature of the process imply a constantly progressive deterioration in the physical condition of the slave? Will not the master be forced by the necessity of self-preservation into a struggle to over-work and under-feed the slave, until, failing to make the products of labor meet the cost of subsisting the laborer, he succumbs; and the social and industrial systems topple in common ruin? Has not philanthropy run mad when it proposes to work out the liberation of the slave by such a process? Does it not arrogate to itself the infallibility of Divine wisdom, when out of humanity to the slave, it would, by force of law, starve him into freedom?

Does it not arrogate to itself the power of the Almighty when it attempts to establish such a system over fifteen communities with complete governments, with a population of twelve and a half millions, and occupying a region larger than half of Europe, by external legislation enforced by external power? If no government known to history has ever been strong enough to do this thing, what terms can adequately characterize the wild hallucination of attempting it through the limited powers and under the self-checking forms of confederation?

3. As the policy operates to restrain the emigration of the owner and the slave, but not the white man who holds no slaves, must not the effect be to cause the latter to emigrate? Must not the proportion of the black race to the white be incessantly increasing by the operation of a permanent cause? At last, when the system culminates in emancipation, must not the result be communities almost exclusively of blacks? Can the whites live in such communities? Should we not, in the ultimate effects of the restrictive policy, convert our sister states into negro governments? Will we then allow them equality in our Union, as our Republican friends propose at the coming election to allow the blacks of this state equality in the elective franchise? Would it not, on the whole, be better to let the black man go towards the tropics as best he may, bond or free, so that, if at last we come to dissolve our Union, the dissolution may be only with the black republics of the tropics; and we may at least retain the original thirteen who fought the battle of our independence, and the riparian states that control the navigation of the Mississippi, with white men for the governing power?

4. Have we sufficiently considered whether acting upon slavery in the territories, in order to react upon it within the states, even if it were within our literal authority, would not be in some sort a fraud on the distribution of powers provided by the constitution? May a man get the Street Commissioner to wall up the entrance to my house on the pretext that it is only exercising the rights of the public over the streets which belong to the public? May

my neighbor flood my farm because the dam which creates the overflow is built upon his own land? May a man plant his foot firmly on the safety-valve and silence the engineer by saying that he does not interfere with the boiler? Now is not the natural increase by which one hundred and twenty thousand are every year added to the slave population as much a necessity as the existence of the present four millions? Is not another four millions of blacks within the next twenty-five years just as much a fact as the present four millions? Can any man stop it? Is not the fact which is to come an inevitable incident to the fact which now exists? Must it not be dealt with as a part of the one great fact? To ignore this inevitable incident, is it not shallow in philosophy, inadequate in policy, disastrous failure in government? And to whom naturally belongs the solution of the problem it creates, except to those communities who have the great trust of the principal fact and whom we do not propose even to consult? Ought we to refuse even to join with ourselves in determining such a question, those who must reap the good or bear the ill of our decision in a case which, so far as the track of southern emigration is concerned, cannot effect us in the least? Should we attempt to establish over them a policy—even if we sincerely think it best for them—which nobody among them can be found to approve or uphold?

5. Would not a wise man, with a conscientious sense of responsibility, although theoretically opposed to slavery, if he were to be invested with absolute power over the primary fact of slavery within the states, or of the incidental fact of its natural growth, find himself unable, just in proportion as he should study these facts, to deal with them on any artificial system of human devising? Well might Mr. Seward say that John Quincy Adams died despairing of a peaceful solution of the question; for he had not, as Mr. Seward has not, any of that master-philosophy for such a problem, which says to the federal government, LET IT ALONE.

6. If in the attempt to solve this problem according to our own ideas, and to enforce our solution through the federative government, adversely to the whole public opinion of the southern states, we should break up the constitutional compact between us, should we not fail of establishing our policy with its imaginary benefits, while we should become the authors of the most transcendent calamity any generation has ever been able to inflict upon mankind?

POLICY OF THE FATHERS.

The traditional policy of our government, established by the fathers, and followed until 1850, is to be studied in all the acts of Congress upon the subject of slavery considered collectively.

It was:

1st. To prohibit slavery by federal legislation, at the instance of the North, and with the consent of the South, in the territories lying substantially within the track of northern emigration.

2d. To leave the territories lying in the track of southern emigration without any federal legislation prohibiting slavery.

The ordinance of 1787, applying the restriction to all territories north of the Ohio, and the Missouri Compromise of 1820, applying it to all territories north of the southern line of Missouri, were the parent measures, to which all the other acts were subordinate. None of the other acts of restriction extended their operation south of the lines established by those measures.

At the adoption of the constitution the southern states consisted of a scattering population upon the eastern slopes of the Alleganies. All the people in the region now embraced in states lying west of the ridge did not much exceed the number of persons to-day congregated in a single ward of the city of New York.

Emigration has pushed westward until almost two-thirds of the present population of the South is in a region which seventy years ago was a wilderness. On the west of Virginia has sprung up Kentucky; on the west of North Carolina, Tennessee; on the west of Georgia and South Carolina, Alabama, and afterwards Mississippi—all formed out of the original domain of the United States.

An entire tier of states on the west bank of the Mississippi, comprising Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri have been added out of Mr. Jefferson's Louisiana purchase. This tier embraces the whole track of the southern emigration, extending to the North even beyond that track. It carries the divisional line in the west, which had been deflected to the south by the adoption of the diagonal course of the Ohio, back to a point somewhat northerly of the line which has become the boundary between the free and the slave systems in the original states, by the voluntary action of those states. Florida on the south and Texas on the southwest have been subsequently added.

Now, in all this region, embracing the entire track of the southern emigration, there has been no legislation of the federative government interfering with the natural course of southern emigration, or disturbing the action of the physical laws by which it is governed, or preventing the establishment by the new communities thus formed of industrial and social systems, similar to those of the states from which the emigration proceeded.

THEIR SELF-RESTRAINT VOLUNTARY.

I know the idea is inculcated that the government has abstained from such legislation only from defect of power or in submission to actual compact.

To this I answer, *first*, that if this allegation were true, it would show that the policy of universal restriction of slavery, which has been ascribed to the fathers, was, at best, but a theory, never reduced to practice; nor of much weight as indicating the matured judgment as to practical legislation of statesmen who were never called on to put a speculative opinion into operation, or of the people who were never called on to submit to its effects; *secondly*, that there is no foundation whatever for the allegation that the fathers would have applied the restrictive system to the track of southern emigration, if they could; or that they omitted to do so from any such necessity as is pretended, or from any reason other than their ideas of the self-retraint which a wise policy imposes on practical statesmen dealing with such a question. They had every means, method and power open to their use which have been proposed to be employed for that purpose in our modern times. I say this advisedly; and though I cannot now stop to discuss details, I hold myself ready to maintain the statement.

Washington, Jefferson and Madison, all Virginians, were undoubtedly opposed in theory to slavery, and looked forward to its ultimate extinction; but they were practical statesmen, and they did not make any serious endeavors to surmount the intrinsic difficulties of the subject, either in Virginia or Kentucky, where it was open to their legal and constitutional action, still less in southern territories through the federative government. They probably were never able to see clearly any satisfactory method and means of giving effect to their desires, even in the infancy of the institution; and they wisely left it to itself until the people interested should feel themselves able to solve the problem. No men had more power to have changed the practical policy and practical results which I have shown to be facts of our history. That policy grew up and matured its fruits during the period of their administrations, and of their unapproachable influence over the public mind of this country, without opposition or dissent from them, often with their concurrence. Jefferson and Madison survived the time of the Missouri controversy; were then in retirement, free from all bias of political aspiration, sedulous only for the welfare and happiness of their country; and certainly not wanting in philanthropy towards any of the human race. They have both left on record their earnest, thoughtful, warning protest against the whole scheme of applying through federal legislation the restrictive system to southern territory, contrary to the will of the existing southern states. That a party organization exclusively northern, dominating in the federal government, should enforce such a system was never within their contemplation. That fact, if it shall be to-day inevitable, will be the political calamity of a later generation.

MODE AND TERMS OF ADJUSTING THE CONTROVERSY.

I assert that a controversy between powerful communities organized into governments, of a nature like that which now divides the North and South, can be settled only by convention or by war. I affirm this upon the universal principles of human nature, and the collective experience of all mankind. I aver it, in defiance of the babbling speech-makers who set up for statesmen without possessing or understanding one element of that character; who pretend to superiority of principle, because they denounce compromise, which is, in the very nature of things, the only solution possible of such a difference between such parties.

By convention, I mean, not an ancient compact of confederation, but a fresh, living, practical assent of the wills of the parties to conditions in which those wills are moderately and fairly represented, so that the acquiescence of both parties may be secured.

INTERESTS OF THE PARTIES.

We must study the practical interests of both parties in the questions, in order to see what conditions will be adequate. The elements of the case are simple.

The northern states have a direct and important interest in keeping the natural course of their emigration into the territories substantially undisturbed, with freedom to such of their people as overflow into the territories to establish in their new seats such systems of industry and society as they have been accustomed to at home.

The southern states have exactly the same interest. Both have an indirect interest in the formation of new states, as it effects the balance of power between the two classes in the confederation.

Now in respect to the first interest, so long as the federal government refrains from interference, there is really no conflict except in imagination. For as long a future as the human vision can clearly scan, both have room enough, and they do not desire to occupy the same space. Slavery not only refuses to go into or towards the track of the northern settlers in the territories, but withdraws faster than white labor can replace it in the territories and contiguous parts of adjacent states.

At an early period southern settlers touched the parts of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, which encroached upon their track, sooner than northern settlers reached any portion of those states; and a feeble disposition to carry slavery there was manifested, but it was ineffectual.

The only other tendency to conflict arose on the border of Kansas, contiguous to Missouri. The divisional line established by the admission of Missouri with slavery, and the restriction of slavery from the territories west of it down to its southern-

most boundary, became at this point perpendicular to the natural line of division between the two westward streams of emigration. It would not have been strange, therefore, if some settlers had crossed the boundary between the two with slavery; but it could gain no stable footing there; for the tendency for it to move down southward from Missouri was stronger than for it to ascend westward into Kansas. And a vast emigration from the northern hives was swarming towards both.

It is my well-considered conviction that not one state is now free from slavery, which would have accepted it if no restriction by federal legislation had ever been enacted.

FORMS OF COMPROMISE.

Compromise of the territorial question has two forms. The one is by a divisional line practically agreed upon by the two sections, and declared by act of Congress. The other is worked out by natural and material causes, and finally declared by each locality when it is admitted as a state.

As an original question, I think the latter mode the best; for it avoids the struggle in fixing the line by the federative government; and it will more exactly respect the natural courses of emigration.

As to the interest of the two parties in the balance of power in the confederated government, the North certainly has nothing to fear. It gains in population at least seven hundred thousand as often as the South gains three hundred thousand, and it can form new states more rapidly. It has the advantage of greater numbers. The South, when attacked, has the advantage of greater unity.

UNION OR DISUNION.

Can the North understand the full import of the federative idea? Can it apply that idea completely to all the relations of the slavery question?

That is the problem of the continued existence of our Union in a government of confederated states. Majorities in all the northern states against all the South are not without extreme difficulty formed or combined, and being wholly unnatural, cannot last long enough to dictate or to fashion a permanent policy for the Union.

Such a result could never be reached except amid an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances, and in an entire failure of the northern people to see that the conflict is anything more to the southern people than it appears to be in the North—an ordinary struggle of political parties. This state of parties is only a paroxysm. Yet the North may, in a paroxysm, alarm and repel the South out of the Union.

LOGICAL RESULT AFTER DISUNION.

If it should do so, and if we should yet escape or recover from civil war, would we not soon wish to establish treaties of peace—of free trade between them and us—of unobstructed intercourse between our citizens? Might we not even desire an alliance for common defence? Is it not clear that such arrangements would be eminently wise and eminently conducive to the prosperity and welfare of both parties? would not such an arrangement be a salutary extension and improvement of the system which modern civilization is applying by diplomacy between independent nations all over the world?

If these results were once successfully accomplished we should have restored an imperfect approach, poor and miserable indeed—far worse than the old confederation—to what our great forefathers intended in our federative government, which they framed and which we shall have broken into pieces; in that case should we have any idea that it would be either our moral right or duty to interfere, in any manner, with slavery within their borders, or to suppress, by force, the natural growth of new communities like their own by the inevitable increase of their population?

Is it necessary for us to travel through all this dreary cycle to reach a result which it is just as wise, just as necessary for us now to adopt? Through what human misery, what individual ruin, what public calamity, would we then have attained a compulsory, and no doubt contented, inaction as to slavery in all those aspects in which it now makes us fanatical.

I say contented inaction; for in that case we should see and feel, that it was no more our moral right or duty to interfere with slavery in a southern state or territory than in the Empire of Brazil. We should thus, over the ruins of our confederated government, have been brought to some sense of the true theory of local self-government under our federal constitution. Our misfortune would be that our wisdom had come too late.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

It is with reluctance that I mingle one word of a personal nature in this discussion. But I must answer my personal friends of the Evening Post, who have courteously invited this discussion, so far as to say that I never held any opinion which could justify either the policy or the organization of the Republican party. If I had done so, I should not hesitate to frankly renounce so grave an error. I admit consistency, so far as it indicates conscientious deliberation and prudence in adopting opinions or in conduct, to be a quality which inspires confidence. But I do not consider it so great a virtue as a fixed purpose to do right; and a single modification in a man's opinions on one of the questions which have occupied the public mind during the period of twenty-five years, ought not to shake an established character for consistency, especially if it be moderate, reasonable and free from every taint of selfishness. But, in truth, I never adopted the doctrine of absolute and universal exclusion, by federal legislation, of slavery from all territories, and still less that of the exclusion of new slave states; or the philosophical theory on which the doctrines are founded.

Mr. Greeley, last fall, detailed and repeated his personal recollection of the anti-Texas meeting of '44 at the Tabernacle, in which, as he alleged, I joined with him. His obvious motive was to embitter against me the resentments of Republicans who once belonged to the school of radical democracy. A candidate, when under the actual circumstances, as was known to the gentleman at whose instance I was nominated, and all my friends, that an election would have been a calamity to me, I felt at liberty to treat this mis-statement—mis-recollection, as I am willing to believe it—as I treated all similar ones of the canvass, with silent indifference. In 1844 I was strongly inclined to the theory in respect to the tendency of slavery to confine itself to its own natural track, which subsequent reflection has established in my mind, and which I have developed in this letter; and I neither said nor did anything inconsistent with it. I thought then that the question ought to be decided, not on the ideas either of New England or of Mr. Calhoun, but on general considerations of national policy; that the acquisition of Texas was expedient, but ought to be conducted in a prudent and proper manner. The provincial ideas of New England were not more offended by that measure than by the acquisition of Louisiana. They did not so strongly threaten to dissolve the Union, as they did on the same grounds, when the

act was accomplished which gave the Mississippi to us all, and to the North, Iowa, Minnesota and the territories stretching to the Pacific. I presume that those from whom I then differed, and who now impeach my consistency, will advise a civil war to keep Texas and her kindred states in the Union if they should now attempt to go out.

On the acquisition of California, the North universally claimed that its *status* should not be changed by the act of the federal government. That was then the leading idea of the radical democrats of this state, as expressed in their most authentic and authoritative declaration. In assenting to that abstract idea, beyond which I never individually went, I did so in a sense of equitable partition, under which we had justified our acceptance of Texas; and might accept Cuba—an abstract idea, however, which it was soon seen could not afford a perfect solution of the whole question in all its future aspects and applications, and which at that time was practically satisfied by the admission of California. Since that time the increasing development of the tendency of slavery to withdraw from even a contiguity to the track of northern emigration, and the immense influx of population from abroad ought to convince every reflecting mind that whatever legal theory is adopted, our old habit of federal restriction over our portion of the territories can be safely abandoned, while any theory which should interfere with the track of southern emigration cannot be safely or rightfully applied by the legislation of the federal government.

The division in the democratic party of this state in 1848 bears no analogy to the Republican organization of to-day. It would not have happened, except for what was deemed to be a violation of the right of representation in a national convention; and the division was the year after composed, while the slavery question was still unsettled. Wise or unwise, right or wrong, it was in substance a mere protest. It is known that my personal wish then was, that its form should not have gone beyond its true practical character. The scheme of a permanent northern party was not, so far as I know, entertained among the radical democrats, except in the mind of one man, with whom it was a mere undeveloped idea, soon abandoned, but resumed in 1855, when he led his followers into the Republican camp. The worst consequence of the division in 1848 was, not like the division of the democratic party now, to bring in a sectional candidate of a sectional party, but merely to let in a national party, with Taylor and Fillmore at its head, under whom the slavery questions were all wisely compromised. On that adjustment I have ever stood. Willing to accept the modern policy of total federal non-action in place of the system of division by federal legislation, I nevertheless used all my influence, at whatever sacrifice of relations, to resist the raising of the question of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, because I thought a theoretical conformity to even a wise system dearly purchased by breaking the tradition of ancient pacification on such a question and between such parties. At the same time, merely a private citizen myself, I appreciate the difficulty a public man has in acting against a general principle for the sake of merely prudential considerations, especially amid a conflict of sections and of parties. I foresaw on the formation of the Republican party, the evils and dangers which it would create, if it should succeed, as it could not have done without great advent itious aids, in combining an unbroken mass of northern majorities; and I communicated my opinion to former political associates who joined the new organization. It is known to many that my whole action since has been dictated by this conviction. I have gone through this explanation on an invitation from those who were once my political as well as personal friends, in order to demonstrate that I have every right to be heard by them, fairly and candidly, when I now state the limitations of our rights and duties.

Let me say also that it was natural that on the happening of the events which gave rise to these questions, the northern mind should at first apply to them—too loosely and broadly I admit—the ideas which it had been accustomed to apply to the subject of slavery at home; ideas which the progress of events and the maturing of opinion have shown must be greatly limited in their application in order to adapt them to the theory of our federative system.

Let me add, that in renouncing the habit of federal legislation as to slavery in which we all grew up, and advocating the idea of federal non interference with the industrial system of the South, I but conform to that sound political philosophy which, upon all the great industrial questions of our times, has always guided not myself alone, but all radical democrats; and which the EVENING POST, *in all cases*, with this single inconsistent, disastrous exception, even now applies and ably champions in conspicuous antagonism to the entire political theory and persistent practice of the party with which it is now, in my judgment, unnaturally, and therefore, I hope, but temporarily associated.

CONCLUSIONS.

My conclusions are:

1. That the southern states will not, by any possibility, accept the avowed creed of the Republican party as the permanent policy of the federative government as to slavery, either in the states or territories; and,

2. That upon this creed the Republican party will not establish any affiliations with considerable minorities in the southern states.

All the evidence is that the non-slaveholders are, generally, at least, as hostile to the Republican creed as the slaveholders. All experience shows that an interest very far less extensive, important and fundamental than that of the slaveholders in the South, usually unites the whole local community in its support, especially against outside interference. And in this case, besides, there is a powerful motive, common to all, to preserve the social supremacy of their race. The very attempt to organize, by outside instigation, a separate class of non-slaveholders against the general opinion of these communities, would be itself a new and intolerable irritation. The dream of a Republican party in the South is a mere illusion.

3. A condition of parties in which the federative government shall be carried on by a party having no affiliations in the southern states, is impossible to continue. Such a government would be out of all relation to those states. It would have neither the nerves of sensation, which convey intelligence to the intellect of the body politic, nor the ligaments and muscles which hold its parts together, and move them in harmony. It would be in substance the government of one people by another people. That system will not do with our race. The fifteen organized states to be subjected to it now occupy a region as large as France, Italy, the Austrian Empire, the German states, and the British Isles. In my judgment, such a condition of things could not become complete in all the departments of the government, before the antagonism of the minority would throw off the government, by secession from the Union.

4. Nothing short of the recession of the Republican party to the point of total and absolute non-action on the subject of slavery in the states and territories could enable it to reconcile to itself the people of the South. Even then it would have great and fixed antipathies to overcome; and men and parties act chiefly from habit.

5. Will the Republican party submit itself to this inevitable necessity to revolutionize its whole character? To attempt this change and not to perish as a dominant party is barely possible. Not to attempt and accomplish it and yet to live as an ascendant power in our Union is totally impossible. The Republican party must become as national in its structure as the whig party was, and submit to the necessary conditions of such nationality, in order to be capable of governing the country. It must travel through the entire cycle of retrogression, and demonstrate that its existence in its present form was a mistake. The national whig party, if it had not been disbanded, might much sooner and more easily have taken the government, and could have done everything which is possible for the Republican party to accomplish without dissolving the Union.

6. The election of Mr. Lincoln, if it should occur, will place the Executive head of the federal government in the false and unnatural position I have depicted; that is to say, place it out of all relation to the people of fifteen states.

To the eyes of these states it appears as the forerunner of a complete system of the same character in the federal government. It fills their people with alarm; it excites strong resentments.

It will be a small alleviation that the result will have come about in some degree by divisions in the democratic party; and by dexterous use of electoral forms, whereby the northern majorities will constitute little over one-third of the whole vote cast.

It will be a greater alleviation, if the House of Representatives should change adversely to the Republican party.

7. Our northern people look at this thing in the light of the ideas which prepossess their own minds. They overlook one fact which renders the position of the parties unequal—the fact that slavery exists at the South and not at the North. They claim equality in the operation of their ideas with those of the other party, which is in many respects peculiarly and exclusively affected by their operation.

They ask, have we not a right to elect a President in a constitutional manner by our votes? You have, in obedience to the fundamental ideas of our confederation, no more moral right to do so on the basis of your present party organization than you have to do a thousand other things which the laws and constitution allow, but which reason, justice, public policy and fraternal sympathy forbid.

The South gave us Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Polk, Taylor, and we voted for them all. We offer them Lincoln, and they say they cannot vote for him because his policy is fatal to what, to them, is a vital interest, while to us it is but an abstract idea. We answer that we know better than they; if they will not agree with us we will not compromise, we will have our own way!

8. A southern partisan presidency on such a controversy, in unison with the southern state governments, would be an evil, even if unavoidable; but it would merely offend the *ideas* of the North. A northern partisan presidency on such a controversy, in conflict with the southern state governments, is manifestly pregnant with perils which no past experience has witnessed, and which threaten the whole fabric of our Union with swift destruction.

9. If we are not wise enough to abstain from creating such a state of things, what right have we to suppose the South will accept it with patience? Seeing the transcendent nature of the interest—they have not the restraint of a party among them holding the sentiments of the northern majority—they think that they are wronged—they feel put upon self-defence. Have we a right to assume that they will act with what, from our point of view, would be a prudent moderation?

I fear that from the very election of Mr. Lincoln, if it should unfortunately happen, we should be embarked upon a frightful agitation in all the South—general alarm and excitement—state conventions to deliberate upon the continuance of the Union. I recoil from contemplating the but too probable consequences in which all this must end. I know that the most wise, prudent, conservative and patriotic men of the most Union-loving states of the South are filled with consternation when they think the great surge of popular excitement which they will be called on to breast.

10. What will Mr. Lincoln do? Can he be expected, as President, to understand the state of things in any other sense than that of his own partisan policy? Can he avoid the attempt to maintain the power of his party by the same means which will have acquired it? Can he emancipate himself from the dominion of the ideas, associations and influences which will have accompanied him in his rise to power? Can he be expected to act in any new direction with sufficient breadth of view and firmness of purpose?

If he shall fail adequately to respond to these great exigencies, the inevitable result as it presents itself to my judgment has been already sufficiently indicated.

11. If he should act in a spirit of large patriotism what will be his position and means?

The history of Jackson's administration throws some light upon the difficulties which, in a vastly aggravated form, he may have to encounter, and upon the methods of action by which, if at all, they must be overcome.

Jackson had to deal with a question comparatively unimportant and far less purely sectional. As a southern man of great popularity and renown, he stood strong in the confidence of all the southern people whose votes had just contributed to raise him to power. He was the head of a strong Jacksonian party organization in every southern state. Clay, the head of the adverse tariff interest, was also a southern man, and at the same time the head of a great party in all those states. And yet, with all these immense advantages, Jackson, because the controversy was partly sectional, was compelled to exert all his power and to display all his courage in order, with the aid of Clay and Webster, to accomplish its adjustment, even upon a basis of compromise and concession, and he accomplished this result at last by fighting the battle through the public opinion of the disaffected section.

Lincoln, if he should, in a crisis far more difficult, stand in the place of Jackson, to confront a public disorder infinitely more extensive, deeply seated and dangerous—as he should stretch his eye a thousand miles over the region of disaffection, would see not one adherent; not one leader of local opinion with whom he was in established relations of friendship, sympathy or support; not one representative to speak in his name, with power to win the ear of the masses; not one of six hundred newspapers devoted to politics, and half that number devoted to other discussions, which had not been preoccupying the minds of the people with distrust, hatred, or fear of him. Without any of the means by which combats of opinion are fought

among a free people, himself an offence, an obstruction, instead of a power to save—the whole strain, the whole shock of the crisis would be thrown upon the mere intrinsic strength of our federal government.

I cannot, for one, assent to the creation of such a state of things. I have a faith in our popular system, which never before faltered, but I dare not precipitate it upon such a trial. It is not a fair experiment. In my judgment, those who think it free from the most imminent peril, display the courage of men who having eyes cannot see. An incredulity, even more serene and stubborn, in the minds of monarchs, ministers and peoples, has often been broken by revolution or by war. Such a crisis as that in which Lincoln's election would place our country can only be prudently treated after fully comprehending it. History is full of illustrations of the inadequate policy which meets civil convulsions, step by step, with concessions, at every stage, insufficient and too late, because the authors of the policy could not anticipate events, and events would not wait.

Elect Lincoln, and we invite those perils which we cannot measure; we attempt in vain to conquer the submission of the South to an impracticable and intolerable policy; our only hope must be that as President he will abandon the creed, the principles and pledges on which he will have been elected.

Defeat Lincoln, and all our great interests and hopes are, unquestionably, safe.

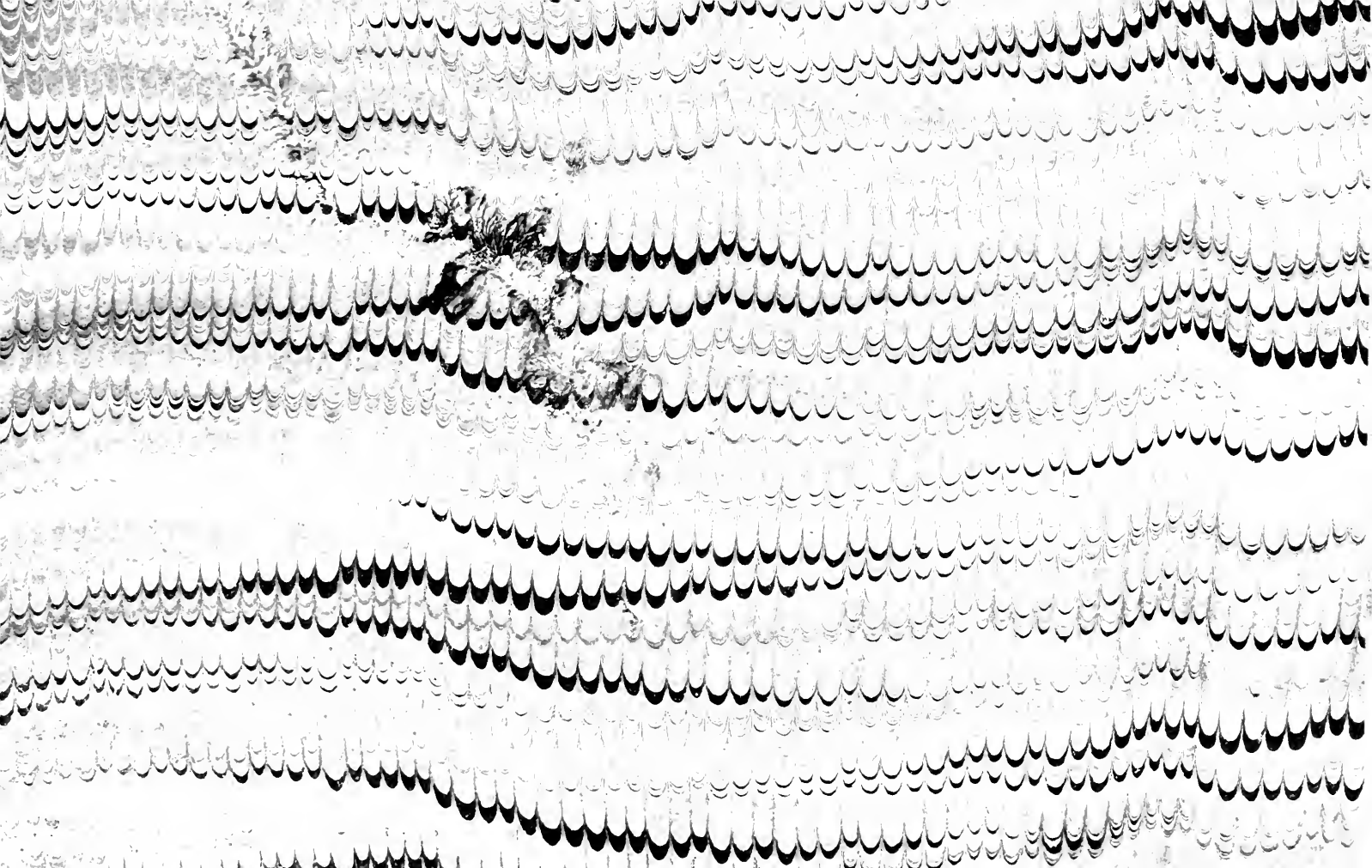
If thus, or in any mode, we escape the perils of which his election will be the signal, our noble ship of state will issue forth from the breakers now foaming around and ahead, and spring forward into the open sea in all the majesty of her strength and beauty.

But if the Providence, which has hitherto guided and guarded our country, shall at last abandon us to our foolish and wicked strifes, I behold a far different scene.

It is too late! It is too late! We are upon the breakers. Whose eye quails now? Whose cheek blanches? It is not mine, who felt a "provident fear," and have done all I could. Where is the excellent President of the Chamber of Commerce, whom they perched up in the forecastle to assure us that a good look-out was kept for our safety? Where are the dozen "great stakes," as Mr. Webster used to call them, whom they planted closely around him to shut out from the sight of the crew the beacon erected by Washington? Where are the thoughtless, reckless seamen who taunted me with cowardice when I vainly strove to warn them? I hear only the wailing cry of selfish terror as I sit upon the straining timbers, and watch the rage of the sea. My mind is filled, my heart swells with the thought, that yon wave which towers before us will engulf more of human happiness and human hopes than have perished in any one catastrophe since the world began.

S. J. TILDEN.

New York, October 26, 1860.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

0 012 025 938 6